

Opening Doors

Grand Opening of The Ramona Apartments May 19, 2011

- Thank you to the PHB team:
 - Margaret Van Vliet
 - Jacob Fox
 - Komi Kalevor
 - Nate McCoy
 - Siobain Beddow

- Today, we officially open the doors of The Ramona to hard-working families and welcome them to one of Portland's most vibrant urban neighborhoods.

- We also celebrate the City's historic commitment – through the use of urban renewal funds – to provide homes for all, regardless of income.

- Thanks to the taxpayers who invested \$20 million in this project.

- I'd like to take a moment on this great occasion to reflect on how access to family-friendly housing has changed in a generation – and how far we still have to go.
- 25 years ago, landlords were under no legal obligation to rent to families.
- That changed in 1988 with the passage of the Fair Housing Act Amendments – which brought families and people with disabilities within the coverage of our nation's civil rights laws.
- In the Senate, Ted Kennedy led the fight to expand civil rights protections.

- In the House, a low-key, principled legislator, guided by his fundamental sense of fairness, brought together an unlikely coalition of realtors and civil rights advocates.
- When Ronald Reagan signed the amendments to the Fair Housing Act, he handed one of the pens to that legislator, my father, Representative Hamilton Fish, Jr.
- When I came to City Hall, I brought that pen with me as a reminder that there is still work to be done.
- As we celebrate the opening of The Ramona today, we know that we are called to complete the work of a previous generation.

- Fair housing audits in Ashland, Beaverton and now Portland remind us that the doors to rental apartments are not open to all.
- Let's be straight: too many Portlanders are being turned away from housing because of their race, national origin, disability and family status.
- This problem will not be solved by a press conference, or a sound bite, or a lawsuit.
- No, it will take a dedicated community coalition to end discrimination in housing.
- In the weeks ahead, working with partners from across our community and on both sides of the political divide, we will be announcing a bold plan to break down barriers to fair housing.

- Many of you fight these battles every day. You know better than most the price of complacency. I ask for your help in this struggle.

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- This Spring, we have great victories to celebrate: for families at The Ramona, for veterans at Block 49 in South Waterfront, for homeless individuals at Bud Clark Commons.
- I am humbled to be part of the passionate and relentlessly hopeful professionals who worked so hard to conceive these projects and create so many new homes.

- Today we celebrate. Tomorrow we go back to work, energized by this moment and the people we serve.

- Thank you and congratulations.